3i Mukherjee O. Y-4, A (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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177 797 gods and call themselves Hindus. We, for our part, have seen many of these reclaimed Santals, (and it was claimed by the authorities of the Hindu Mission that they succeeded in reclaiming a lakh of people within a short time in the Santal Parganas)... a procession of white-robed Santals wearing Hindu dresses, carrying tall sticks and anointed with sandal-pastes. Some of them carried drums and flutes while going to offer pujas to the Goddess Durga, cheek by jowl with the Hindus.[1]

177 162 [797] For our part, we think that the task of the Hindu Mission is an easier one when we remember that 586,499 persons were found to be Hindu Santals in Bihar and Orissa in the census report of 1931, and in the Mayurbhanj State 254,596 persons returned themselves as Hindu Santals in the last census. It is also worthy of note that the Mayurbhanj State has always shown eagerness to extend to the Santals all privileges open to others. Cow-killing is prohibited within the State, and how far Hindu ideas have penetrated into Santal society will be apparent even to a casual observer.

177 [641] [656]

Added to these, it must be remembered that the Santals do not live in water-tight compartments of their own, although their hamlets are separate from the rest. The Hindu "Kamar" does work for them,

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1 The Hindu Mission in Bihar and Orissa came into existence in 1925.

Jt Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1935-1939) 1962
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668 common platform. They long for the development of their distinctive culture—a pre-Dravidian Jharkhand.

177 648 [641] Now with Independence, and its concomitant adult franchise, things are undergoing a rapid transformation. The Santal, along with the other aboriginals, like his more civilised brethren has got to handle a ballot paper. They see that the more advanced Indians are trying to have a better standard of life and are rushing in for more and more of education, for amenities of life hitherto denied to the hill and jungle-folk. Development plans of the government, Community projects, programmes of tribal uplift are gradually throwing open to them roads, motor lorries, schools and fineries. Planes buzz over them, radios blare and torch lights flash. With all the glare of modernism in their eyes, is it a wonder that these aboriginals, so long living idyllic lives in the backwoods of songs and dances are puzzled at the threshold of a New World?

177 So long the seeds of a new order were in the air. Old sets of value now seemed disturbed. In [184] Bolpur area, one could notice new house-types with [342] windows and furniture, they lacked in the past. [352] Santals were found chewing betels, drinking less and [27] taking to milk and tea and cigarettes. Many have [262] given up beef like the Hindus, even buffalo meat and pork have gone off their menu. The old Santal